

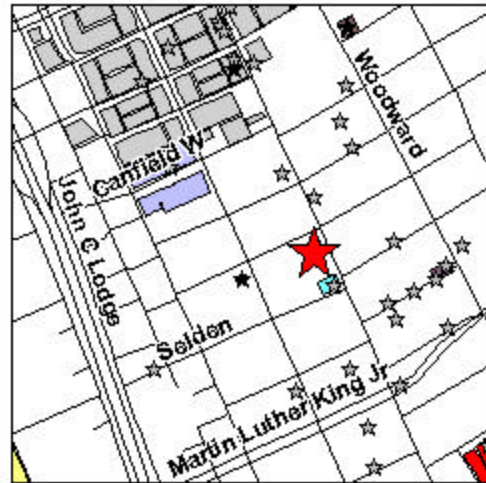
Art Center Music School Historic District

General boundaries: 3971-3957 Cass Ave. and West Alexandrine.

Local v 3/12/93
State
State Marker
National



Art Center Music School



Historic overview:

The Robert H. Brown House, the former William R. Hamilton Funeral Home, is now home to the Art Center Music School. The house was built for Robert H. Brown and his wife Jennie in 1891. The house architect was Almon Clothier Varney, one of the most prolific residential architects in Detroit in the last two decades of the 19th century. N. Frank Hamilton and William Otter of the William Hamilton Corporation purchased the property in 1916. In anticipation of expanding their mortuary facilities, they purchased adjoining lots. William Hamilton Corporation was a long established Detroit mortuary business established in the 1880's.

What was then the Cass Avenue Funeral Home was sold in 1979 to the Synanon Foundation. This California based drug rehabilitation group could not attain the proper zoning because of neighborhood opposition and put the building up for sale. In 1981 the property was sold to Dr. Nellie Huger Ebersole, head of the Art Center Music School. After brief work as a Minister of Music to churches in Philadelphia and New York, she came back to Detroit in 1928. During the Depression she joined the W. P. A. and helped in establishing music projects in 65 institutions in the Metro Detroit area. The Art Center School was originally established in 1922 and is presently Detroit's oldest ongoing school of music, whose mission is to provide quality music instruction to low and moderate income families at affordable rates.

The Brown House was originally built as a single-family residence. The 2½-story house with rock faced sandstone foundations, architectural elements and trim is Queen Anne in style. When the chapel building, an example of Egyptian Revival, was added in 1930, the two buildings were joined.

